



Fw: SLO County Tourism Business Improvement District renewal

Nikki Schmidt to: Annette Ramirez

05/10/2014 10:07 AM

Hi Annette....

We received this email and letter pertaining to the CBID renewal for the public record.



Cambria Tourism Board 9-30-13 SLO 5-13-14.pdf

Nikki

Nikki J. Schmidt
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----- Forwarded by Nikki Schmidt/Admin/COSLO on 05/10/2014 10:06 AM -----

From: Elizabeth Bettenhausen <elizabethbettenhausen@gmail.com>
To: Adam Hill <ahill@co.slo.ca.us>, Bruce Gibson <bgibson@co.slo.ca.us>, Caren Ray <cray@co.slo.ca.us>, Debbie Arnold <darnold@co.slo.ca.us>, Frank Mecham <fmecham@co.slo.ca.us>
Cc: Nikki Schmidt <nschmidt@co.slo.ca.us>
Date: 05/04/2014 10:21 AM
Subject: SLO County Tourism Business Improvement District renewal

[attachment "Cambria Tourism Board 9-30-13 SLO 5-13-14.pdf" deleted by Nikki Schmidt/Admin/COSLO]

RE: "Tuesday, May 13, 2014, in the County of San Luis Obispo Board Chambers, 1055 Monterey Street, California, a public meeting shall be held to allow public testimony regarding the renewal of the CBID and to continue the levy of assessments therein as set forth in the enclosed resolution of intention"

Dear Supervisors:

The extreme drought in San Luis Obispo County leads me to ask this question. How does your renewal of the CBID hold tourism businesses accountable for mitigating and minimizing water use in the hospitality industry? How does expanding the tourism industry take account of declining natural resources?

I see no reference whatsoever in

the agenda materials of April 22, 2014, to this urgent matter. We continue to act as if economic interests and ecological protection have no intrinsic connection. This naivete carries us into disaster.

I attach the letter I wrote to the Cambria Tourism Board, which was also published as a Viewpoint in The Cambrian.

I volunteer at the Cambria Grammar School on Tuesdays and cannot attend your meeting. Please put my e-mail and attached letter into the public record.

With gratitude for your careful consideration of this issue, I am

Sincerely yours,
Elizabeth Bettenhausen
Cambria, California

Elizabeth Bettenhausen, Ph.D.
345 Plymouth Street
Cambria, CA
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1 October 2013

Dear Cambria Tourism Board:

The County Business Improvement District (CBID) Stewardship Travel and Discovery Route programs on the Wine Coast Country web site show Cambria tourism well. The Cambria Tourism Board certainly understands the hospitality industry locally and how to advertise it.

Three concerns come to my mind as I study the programs. We were told last month by the General Manager of the Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) that water use in Cambria during Pinedorado was 1 million gallons per day. The usual use is 600,000 gallons. The event saw a 66% increase in water use on a weekend drawing many tourists.

My first concern has to do with use of natural resources locally. What specific plans do CBID and the Cambria Tourism Board have to off-set the increased water use by a greater number of tourists coming to town? How do your programs mitigate their negative effects on the local supply of water?

The negative effects are not simply the greater use of limited water. The infrastructure for water distribution and sewage capturing and treatment is also put under much higher stress. What specific tasks have the CBID and CTB chosen to reduce, mitigate, or off-set the economic and environmental effects of the increased burden on Cambria's infrastructure?

I certainly understand and appreciate that the town of Cambria offers coastal access to many tourists from around the world. I visited here for many years before becoming a full-time resident. The town should support public access to the beaches and the basic needs of visitors.

However, unlimited growth of the hospitality industry in town endangers the community. The aquifers provide only limited water, as we certainly know right now. Cambria does not have a legal right to all the water in the San Simeon and Santa Rosa watersheds. Miles and miles of water and sewer pipes were not laid for a population of 6000 plus an increasingly frequent explosion of water use due to more and more tourists lodging here, eating in restaurants, and using public facilities.

My second concern: How does the Stewardship Travel program help sustain the “pristine untouched environments” in Cambria (a favorite expression on the Wine Coast Country web site to describe our town)? Apart from volunteering at Fiscalini Ranch and attending the Discovery Center lecture series, what stewardship actually takes place because of the programs? How are damaging touches in fact prevented?

Nowhere in the CTB documents does a concern appear for how rapidly increasing use of the community and its environs by more and more tourists sustains the environment. Simply mentioning eco-tourism does not mean that eco-tourism is carefully defined and practiced. In Stewardship Travel, attention must be paid to the environmental consequences of all dimensions of a rapidly growing hospitality industry, not just to language such as “clean, green, sustainable commerce” or “doing good and feeling good.” Your advertising is meant to appeal to people with an income of at least \$100,000 per year, according to your statements. What specific opportunities do you offer to these very affluent tourists to be Stewardship Travelers as such?

The over-arching name, Wine Coast Country, raises a third concern. Since I moved to Cambria, the wine industry has grown in the town and vicinity. I too enjoy wine. However, the effects of the vineyard and vintner boom in San Luis Obispo county can no longer be obscured. Water use exceeds the supply in the ground. Environmental and ecological judgments must be made according to watershed and aquifer conditions, not private property lines. Need and desire have to be distinguished, and the commonwealth must not be used to serve desire at the expense of unmet basic need.

Here in Cambria we have not learned very well that treatment of the environment and consequences for the economy are inseparable. But the American Dream is discovering that if you've emptied the resources savings account, you can no longer transfer what you thought were unlimited funds to the checking account. If you talk the talk but don't walk the walk, nature will no longer be able to sustain human life. That's already true right here in Cambria for many plants and animals, and humans will soon suffer the same consequences of our unrealistic actions.

Cambria has been growing and growing and growing. Now not only drought confronts us. We discover that the charm of the "pristine untouched environment" daily erodes because of the strong winds of negligent over-use.

I look forward to learning how you will make your programs true stewards of the "pristine untouched environment." I love Cambria. I know you do too. All of us must work together to face squarely the real conflict the community has created between net profit standards and life necessity standards. That is a Discovery Route worth taking. Otherwise, what will we be loving?

Sincerely,
Elizabeth

cc: Cambria Community Services District Board of Directors and General Manager
Cheryl Cuming, San Luis Obispo County Tourism Business Improvement District
Julia Mitchell, Managing Assistant of CTB
The Chamber of Commerce of Cambria representatives on CTB
Bruce Gibson, SLO Board of Supervisors
Richard Hawley, Executive Director of Greenspace
Claudia Harmon-Worthen, North Coast Advisory Council
Bert Etling, Editor, The Cambrian
other interested individuals